MIND MAPPING

MASTERCLASS

Mind Mapping

How to Learn More and Remember Better

Introduction

My Story

Trouble Learning in School..

During my school years I wasn't the best student.. School was so boring for me! Nothing we were doing seemed to have any relation to the real world.. Simply consuming information because 'I might need it later' didn't seem to make much sense..

The subjects didn't seem to stimulate me creatively either.. I looked down on myself for years because I had this problem of not being able to focus..

I now know it's because my brain doesn't work linearly.. Which is what memorization and writing on paper is all about.. Linear thinking!

Instead my brain is creative, big picture and connection focused.. And I expect that if you're here your brain probably works the same!

The good news is that I've figured out a way to harness that power instead of feeling bad about it..

Book a Week

A couple of years after college I decided to take up the challenge of reading a book a week.. Everything from personal development to productivity to spirituality!

These books all made a big impact on me.. Especially in the beginning!

But eventually I saw a pattern..

This is what it looked like:

Most of these books end up teaching very similar concepts.. The books quite often caused me to make short term and radical shifts in my daily life.. Those shifts ended up being short lived and caused quite a lot of anxiety and distrust in myself..

So what was gained from the book a week journey?

First I realized that it wasn't my inability to learn that was the problem but that I didn't have a strong enough 'why' while I was in school..

Second it was the realization that no information is really new.. Most of it has been articulated and the real principles are the important part of learning..

Third I realized that trying to take any information as gospel and apply it consciously into my daily life makes learning and life a lot less enjoyable..

Fourth was the understanding that almost all information is principle based.. Meaning that real knowledge comes from understanding how to apply principles to other areas of your life!

Therefore I realized that the process of learning isn't necessarily linear.. It's not the more information you know the better off you are as I once thought..

Instead it's a process of training your mind to find, what information is important and why..

What the fundamental principles behind the information is..

How you can already see the information at play in your life.. Negatively or Positively..

Using your innate creatively to apply the information to other areas of your life..

Mind Mapping

Searching for answers to these 'problems' I've had with learning and personal development lead me to Mind Mapping..

At first I thought it would be a good way to memorize information.. (Which it is).

But then I realized that again the problem wasn't memorizing things.. It was how to get the information in front of me to have an lasting impact on my life!

It's a funny thing memorization.. It doesn't work the way you think it would.. It is great for recalling on tests or looking smart in front of friends.. But what else?

Just because you've memorized something doesn't mean you will implement it, be aware of it in daily life or be able to help someone else with it!

So this lead me to look for other learning systems.. Ones that would help me apply information to my life!

Through different books, teachings and courses I found the 4MAT method of learning that we'll talk about a little later..

This method solved all of my problems with traditional learning..

I was able to only choose books, courses or articles that had a strong 'WHY' to me.. Something I felt drawn too. From there I was able to capture the relevant information quickly and identify patterns between different teachings..

After the information was down 4MAT allows you to think fully through the information and identify how it is impacting you..

Finally 4MAT encourages us to think about how this information might be at play in other areas..

So now I found it! The learning system that works in the real world..

What could be better?

Well.. It just so happens that 4MAT is a non-linear way of thinking that fits perfectly with Mind Mapping!

This is what we'll be learning in the course..

How Mind Mapping Helps

Full Creative Control

Mind Maps allow you to have as much creative control or as little creative control as you desire for any project.. The mind doesn't remember words in a string nearly as much as it remembers colours, sequences and pictures!

Mind Maps can adapt to any possible thought framework.. Don't like the 4MAT one I've presented? Change it up!

Information Hierarchy

Mind Maps are structured the same way that the mind stores information.. In an information hierarchy! The mind uses it's neurons to link one piece of information to another in a sequential manner..

Information hierarchy is essentially linking the most important (or biggest) piece of information to multiple smaller pieces in an infinite manner..

Better Memory

One study showed that Mind Maps allowed participants to remember up to 32 percent more information.. This is because Mind Maps are mimicking the way that our brains work.. Plus it allows us to use more sensory input!

There are many different learning styles Mind Maps allow us to identify our own way of learning and adapt to it as opposed to adapting our learning to the medium..

Abstract and Granular

Mind Maps allow us to look at both the big picture and the finer details.. This allows us to come up with creative solutions to problems.. Also by seeing the bigger picture we can create links between seemingly unrelated information.. Improving memory and creativity!

Learning Models

The learning model we'll present here will force you to think all the way around the information.. Hitting on all four learning styles not only helps you remember but helps you to integrate information!

Mind Mapping lends itself very well to developing different thought models for learning, planning and creativity. (More on the second two to come).

Brainstorming

This is one of the most important skills in todays market.. Coming up with creative solutions to problems is very valuable and Mind Maps give us a great tool to help with that! The hierarchical structure and ability to see the abstract and granular gives us the ability to make connections which is what creativity really is..

Course Layout

After this introduction we'll speak about the technical aspects of Mind Mapping..

- How to use the tech (XMind)
- The terminology we use in Mind Mapping
- How to structure your maps in the 4MAT model

Principles of our Mind Mapping process will give an understanding of my process without sticking you into a mold..

- The 80/20 principle of information and Mind Mapping
- How to focus for long periods of time on learning
- The 4MAT learning model for Mind Mapping success
- How presenting (even to yourself) is going to help you learn, be more creative and implement the information into your life

Exercises will give you 3 Template Mind Maps to test out on your own!

- First I will go through them with you and explain my process..
- After that I will set you free and let you Mind Map in the wild!

Mind Mapping Technical

Structure

Main Topic:

The reason for the mind map

Book title, presentation title or topic title

Clear and easy to understand

Parent Nodes:

Break down the information into subtopics

These subtopics all relate to the main topic but don't necessarily relate to eachother

These are the colored nodes in my maps..

Generally I try to make them short and easy to remember

Child Nodes:

This is where the real information is stored..

The eldest child node is where I copy information from the piece of content I'm Mind Mapping

Below that is where I implement the 4MAT thinking process and expand on the information

Information Hierarchy:

Biggest Concept

Sub Concepts

Generally these are in chronological order from the piece of information

Sometimes I will re-arrange them after they are input into the Map if it makes more sense..

Information:

The information I put into the Mind Map is always highlighted and taken directly from the subject

This is because I may decide to re-visit the Mind Map again in the future and re-think the information..

But I don't want to re-think my own paraphrased version of the information because that would be biased..

Thought Model:

The thought model structure I go through is always the same 4MAT model..

Sometimes I expand more on one type of learning more than the other..

Generally people I teach this method too find their own favorite type of learning and use the others to simply support it..

Processing Information:

Intaking Information

First thing I do is intake the information and as I do I think about what the structure of my Mind Map might be..

Think about what the Main Topic of the information is.. Think about what the subtopics might be and how they would be structured..

While intaking the information I physically highlight the points I think might be put into the information part of the map.. This forces me to be very particular about the information I highlight (using the 80/20 principle we'll talk about below)

Simply because I don't want to have a Mind Map that is more than 6-13 nodes..

This is probably mostly personal preference but I've noticed after 10+ nodes it starts to become more of an exercise in note taking rather than thinking..

Inputting Information:

First thing I do when inputting information is create structure.. Name the main topic and the subtopics..

Second I copy the information highlighted into the Mind Map and structure it so it's not a giant wall of text..

After I'm done that I move onto the thought model..

Thought Model Thinking:

This is by far the most important process.. After all of the information is input into the Mind Map I turn on the ZEN mode and think all the way through each subtopic.. I do this by using the 4MAT learning model we'll talk about below

Editing (and why):

The first draft of each Mind Map is usually just a good starting off point.. I will let those ideas mature in my Mind for as long as I can and then revisit the Map and re-think and (edit) the thought model part..

This gives me a chance to change my mind with the perspective I've gained over the hours, days or weeks I let the ideas mature in my subconscious mind

Principles

80/20 Principle

What is it?

The 80/20 principle states that 80 percent of your results will come from 20 percent of your efforts.. This means that if you read 100 pages of something 20 of those pages will have 80 percent of the information..

How can we use this to our advantage?

Well by understanding and adhering to the 80/20 principle we can make better choices.. When we know what we want to learn we can better choose the places we might learn it from..

This basically says don't pick a textbook if a book would do and don't pick a book if an article might do

This also means to choose mediums that work best for you.. If you find that you can learn more effectively and efficiently from interviews than books then use those or vice versa!

The 80/20 principle gives you permission to ruthlessly decide the type of information you choose to read.. When we know what we want to learn we can better choose what to pay attention to..

Now that we've decided on what to learn from we should also be away that the 80/20 principle applies to that information as well.. 20 percent of a book contains 80 percent of the information.. So does 20 percent of an article or course..

This can take quite a bit of practice to implement.. But the 80/20 principle states that you can ruthlessly decide not to read entire chapter, paragraphs or sentences of a book!

Material

Types of Information:

- Summaries
- Articles
- Books
- Interviews
- Presentations
- Etc

How to decide what to read?

What outcome do you want?

Summaries: General Knowledge

Articles: Presentation

Books: Deeper Knowledge

Interviews: Action Points

What if you learn better from a particular medium?

I tend to believe that people learn better from certain mediums.. This is totally understandable as we all have different learning styles and each medium might cater to a different learning style..

So if this is you.. Please disregard all of the information above.. Learn from the medium you prefer! Don't try to force yourself to read if you're a better listening or listen if you're a better reader. This is not the time or place for it.

Process

he process of 80/20 in taking in new information can be hard to learn.. When you're only reading 20% of a book you can feel like you missed something.. When you're listening on 2x speed and only slowing down during certain parts it can feel like you're wasting time..

But here is why it's worth it.. There is only so much attention available..

Wouldn't you rather learn how to spot useful information and use your attention on it? Rather than treating all information the same and burning your attention out on things that might not matter!

This is my process in a nutshell for 80/20 while learning..

First you should understand the outcome you want (as we talked about before)

After that you should read the first section (Chapter, Paragraph or Opening)

Then skip directly to the conclusion (Chapter, Summary or Closing Statements)

Now make a mental note of the things you don't understand or that you feel might need more explaining for you..

After these notes you should feel comfortable deciding what to take in (Chapters, Paragraphs or Sections) and what to skip over.. I also tend to use speed reading techniques that are more technical than this course has time to explain.. But here are a few you can test right away!

Try reading only the first sentence of every paragraph and only slowing down once you get lost..

Try reading only the opening and closing paragraphs of each chapter..

Try listening to things on 2x or 3x speed and only slowing down when you get lost or something is important..

All of these things not only cut the time you spend reading, listening and learning by a lot but they also require you to stay laser focused!

Focus

The Power of Focus

One of the more meta things that learning is good for is it really hones two powerful skills..

Skill number one is the ability to parse or 80/20 information.. Meaning that you have the ability to learn new things quicker!

Skill number two is the ability to focus and think deeply about a particular topic.. This skill requires honing especially in todays Day and Age!

I think Mind Mapping allows us to really work on both of these two skills..

When we read something or listen to something without the need to 'produce' a summary of it we end up just taking in all the information.. Not even thinking about what might be important!

When we Mind Map it gives us a chance to be creative, dip into a flow state and practice our focus!

Below are some of the techniques I use to work on my focus..These techniques work well for me! But you may have to find things that work for you..

Just like we all have different learning styles we all have different focus styles as well..

Focusing Techniques

Taking in Information

When taking in information we want to be sure we stay stimulated.. The speed reading techniques we talked about before actually increase our focus because of this.. As soon as you stop focusing you will get lost in the information so it provides an amazing feedback loop!

Most of the time I find when I'm taking in information I need silence.. This provides a great environment for the mind to stay focused on the information at hand..

When we have music or outside noise playing the brain has to sort through another layer of what's important!

Taking in information is not just the act of reading, listening or watching.. But also the act of processing! Because of this I like to read in small chunks and take fairly large breaks between to do something entirely different..

When I read for about 20 minutes and then take a 10 minute break to stretch, talk to someone or just sit in silence the information I read sticks much better..

Even if you read for an hour a day by doing this sequence you will get 40 minutes of reading in that will be worth much more than 1 hour of straight reading..

Creating Mind Maps

When we're thinking through problems and creating something new we want to get into a state of flow..

Mind Maps are amazing at helping with this..

First of all XMind has the amazing capability of going into 'zen' mode which shuts off all external distraction!

Second the Mind Mapping process has an amazing ability to stimulate stream of consciousness writing.. You never have to take a break and can just continue to produce!

Third and perhaps most important you always have a gauge of how much you're producing.. Something important for creating a flow state is to feel as though you're making progress!

The flow state can take a few minutes to get into.. Therefore I don't think it's smart to do the 20/10 pomodoro split that we talked about before!

Instead I think it's much more effective to work on a 40 minutes of work and 20 minutes off.. This gives you enough time to get through the first 5-10 minutes which are always tough..

But also gives you enough time to actually get a lot of work done.. The last 30 minutes you will be amazed at how much you produce!

Don't edit on the first time.. This is one thing I learned the hard way.. When we edit on the first pass we turn on our internal critic which will really break our progress..

Instead I recommend you leave all spelling errors or sentences that don't make sense in the map until you decide to edit! Music is helpful to get into the flow state..

This is maybe personal preference but I find that a nice piece of relaxing music makes it easier to turn off the internal editor.. Pick something either without lyrics or lyrics that you know off by heart so you don't get distracted.

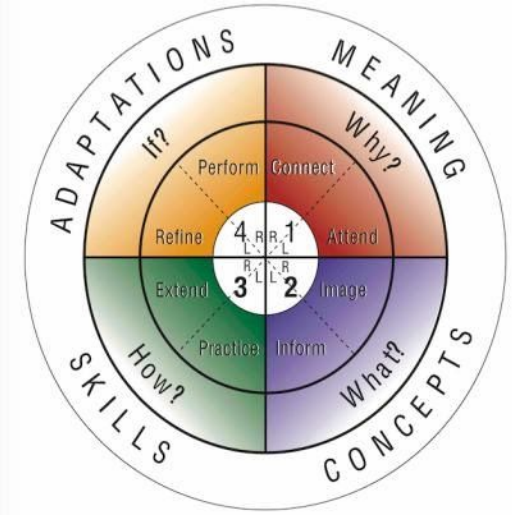
4MAT Learning Model

Overview

The 4MAT Learning Model was develop to help us think through information in a more dynamic and engaging way! The model contains four different quadrants that relate to each learning style..

Each person likely has one primary learning style.. Some people know what theres is and some don't! Most information is put forth in a 'what' style or simply a theoretical breakdown..

But by identifying our main learning style as well as filtering information through all four different learning styles we can dramatically increase our learning ability..



The 4MAT Model

Why:

Why do I need to learn this?

This might be you if:

You find yourself constantly wondering 'how does this apply' or if you get bored by information quickly.. These people care more about what the information means to them than what the information is.. Why learners tend to have trouble getting started on topics that don't excite them

Mind Mapping Why

Improve your ability to 80/20

Improve your ability to focus

Improves critical thinking skills

What:

What is the theoretical breakdown of the concepts?

This might be you if:

You're the type of person who likes to learn simply for learnings sake.. These people are often quoting books or articles!

What learners tend to have trouble with implementing the information into relevant information

Mind Mapping What

Technical Aspects of Mind Mapping

Structure of information

How:

How the information applies to your life?

This might be you if:

You're skipping to the parts of the information that contain the 'how to' or strategies. These people are often trying new techniques or tricks they learned from somewhere else..

How learners tend to have trouble because they skip from technique to technique without understanding why..

Mind Mapping How

Start by speed reading a piece of information

Break it down into subtopics

Expand on subtopics using the 4MAT model

What If:

Where else could this information apply?

This might be you if:

You're an innovator or an entrepreneur who sees solutions to problems others don't..

These people are often working on projects and relating new information they learned to that project.. What if learners tend to suffer from the same problems as Why and How learners..

Mind Mapping What If:

Apply Mind Mapping to goal setting

Apply Mind Mapping to creative pursuits

Use Mind Mapping to structure information

4MAT and Mapping

Main Topic:

Choosing our 'Main Topic' whether it be a book or an article should be done using the 4MAT model..

4MAT for Choosing Information:

Why is this piece of information important to me?

What am I trying to learn from this information?

How will this information apply in my life?

Where else might this information be relevant?

Subtopics:

When creating our 'Subtopics' we should keep the 4MAT model in mind..

4MAT for Creating Subtopics

Why did this topic stick out?

What theoretical information was helpful?

Will this topic relate to my life?

Was this topic a principle or a strategy?

Copied Information:

When creating our 'Subtopics' we should keep the 4MAT model in mind..

4MAT for Creating Subtopics

Can I clearly see why this information is important?

Does this expert capture the theoretical information?

Does this information give me a process?

Does this information apply to more than one area?

4MAT:

When creating our 'Subtopics' we should keep the 4MAT model in mind..

4MAT for Creating Subtopics

Why is this information important to me or someone else?

What does the author tell us about the information?

Can I create a simply process to follow?

Alternatively can I see how this is already at play in my life?

Where else can this information be used?

Alternatively where else is this information already at play in my own life?

Presenting

While I'm in the flow of writing a Mind Map I try not to self censor..

The process of writing is hard enough without having a critic looking over your shoulder.. So to get the most out of Mind Mapping DO NOT edit while you are writing..

Instead wait until after you're finished the Map or at the very least finished a section of the Map!

But the editing process is very important and this is how I like to go about it.. While I'm editing I will read through the Mind Map either in my head or out loud.. Instead of thinking 'is this right' or 'is this important' I think of someone in particular I would present this information too..

Most often for me it's you.. The audience on my YouTube Channel.. But before I did that it might have been my brother, parents or girlfriend.. One great person to keep in mind is either your past or future self as well..

Then while going through the map I ask myself.. Would this make sense to them?

Using the 4MAT model allows us to think all the way through the information.. But one of it's other uses is as an amazing presenting tool! So if you're going through your Map and feel like someone might not understand it's because you didn't cover one of the quadrants fully..

Once you've identified that quadrant.. Simply spend some time expanding on that particular aspect..

Feel like someone might not have a practical step by step process to implement something? Create one..

Feel like someone might not be able to understand why this is important? Be more persuasive..

Creating a Mind Map so you can present it doesn't mean you have to do it..

Although it is helpful.. Let's say you're trying to convince someone, help someone or share information!

How much better might you get at it if you practiced it in your head over and over again when you got new information?

The skills of persuasion and coaching are some of the most valuable in today's society.. These are the exact skills we are building while we are 'present-editing'. But the presentation also helps you.. Because in order to present something you must KNOW it!

Einstein said if you don’t know the topic well enough to explain it to a 5 year old you don't know it well enough.. Teaching is the best way to learn something new because it provides real time feedback.. Meaning if you don't know something well enough you will easily be able to identify it..